

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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GENERAL

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1. Approximately 1000 people, both Soviets and Germans, were employed at Branch No. 1 of Institute 88 on Gorodomlya Island. These people, quartered on the island in wooden houses, had been brought to Gorodomlya for the sole purpose of staffing Branch No. 1. Some of the original inhabitants of the island still lived in a tiny village there.
2. Communication with the mainland across Lake Seliger was by a small steamer in the summer, and during the winter it was possible to walk to Ostashkov across the frozen lake. The cold easterly winds which blew across the island in the wintertime occasionally caused temperatures of -30°C .

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3. The Germans on the island were required to obtain a special permit in order to visit Ostashkov and, when permission was granted, a security guard always accompanied the visitors.
4. The settlement on Gorodomlya, in addition to being isolated from the life of the mainland, was apparently a new community; and island health statistics, even if I knew them, would not reflect typical Soviet community conditions.

DISEASE INCIDENCE

5. Malaria presented the only serious disease problem, except for an outbreak of scarlet fever in 1951, which I experienced on Gorodomlya from 1948-1952. Approximately 50 percent of the island population had malaria in 1948-49. In early 1950 an attempt was made to stamp out the disease. Blood tests of all the residents of Gorodomlya, and probably also of Ostashkov, were made. A nurse paid daily visits to those who had been found to be malarial and gave them akrihin tablets which were to be taken three times a day. Specialists were called in from Kalinin. These specialists distributed a powder and directed that it be spread in every dwelling and every mosquito shelter. The serious cases were treated with injections, presumably of akrihin. These efforts produced results and the number of cases of malaria decreased, but the disease did not disappear.
6. Everyone on Gorodomlya Island was infested with ascarids and tapeworms. It was almost impossible to rid oneself of these parasites, since effective counteractives were virtually unobtainable. Various capsules and green pills, both of composition unknown to me, were distributed by the dispensary doctors, but these remedies were of little help. Some success in the deworming effort was obtained by drinking large amounts of whisky.
7. Bronchial congestion was a common malady. I believe it was caused by the damp weather which existed throughout the summer months.
8. Cancer was a frequently encountered disease on Gorodomlya. I knew of three cases among the Germans; two were cancer of the stomach and one was cancer of the liver.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

9. A small dispensary was located on Gorodomlya Island. Two female physicians, both poorly qualified medically, four nurses, a dentist, and several midwives constituted the professional staff. The physicians at the dispensary handled only routine cases; the five or six beds there were used only for patients with severe colds. Those suffering from ailments requiring more than this minimal care, including dental, were sent to Ostashkov for treatment. I recall that the dentist on Gorodomlya once sent a patient to Moscow for consultation. I wish to add that, although professionally incompetent, the senior physician at the Gorodomlya dispensary was a good administrator and kept excellent records.
10. There was a combined polyclinic and hospital with about 250 beds in Ostashkov. This hospital had been damaged during

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World War II and reconstruction was completed in 1950. In addition to the polyclinic, the following facilities were also available at Ostashkov; an infectious disease barracks with 50 beds, a children's station with a few beds, and a small dispensary. Mothers on Gorodomlya Island were required to report to the polyclinic shortly after giving birth.

11. The hospital at Ostashkov had a full staff of specialists, including an ear, nose, and throat physician, a surgeon, dentist, internist, and neurologist. I believe this staff was quite capable. Sirulik, a surgeon at Ostashkov, Jewish, 42 years old, was very competent. On one occasion he had to perform an operation on a patient suffering from a perforated appendix. The electricity was unexpectedly turned off and he was able to successfully complete the operation by oil lamp.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

12. Supplies of simple drugs at Ostashkov were adequate to meet the needs of the hospital. Penicillin was very scarce at all times. Liver extract was very scarce and very expensive; it was always of poor quality.
13. A chloramine solution was the only disinfectant available. It was spread over the beds and floors of all the rooms in the infectious disease station. This solution was also used to disinfect the general hospital laundry as well as that of the infectious disease barracks.

HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

14. Health affairs on Gorodomlya Island centered in the dispensary there. The small staff, however, was incapable of carrying on steady campaigns against diseases. I know of no public health propaganda that was used, other than anti-tuberculosis brochures which were on display at the dispensary. There were no active programs to combat, for example, either tuberculosis or venereal diseases.
15. The senior physician at the dispensary probably reported all her findings on disease occurrence, made known to her through the dispensary patients, to higher authorities. I believe this because, as stated previously, she maintained such records well.
16. The health administration at Gorodomlya, while very limited, did have recourse to obtaining assistance other than from Ostashkov. The specialists that were sent from Kalinin in 1950 to combat the malaria epidemic was an instance of such outside aid.
17. In 1949 the dispensary inoculated all personnel employed at Branch No. 1 and their families against typhoid, dysentery, and, I believe, cholera. This inoculation was combined in one 3 c.c. dose given at one time, and repeated once a year. The needles used were large, dirty, and rusted. The injection site was very painful and frequently became abscessed. I estimate that 50 percent of those inoculated were sick for several days after the injection. Children from 12-16 years of age received a dose of 1/2 c.c.

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18. I know of no social welfare assistance other than the maternity leave which was granted to pregnant women. This leave commenced during the four-week period prior to and the four-week period following the birth of the child.

FOOD AVAILABILITY AND INSPECTION

19. Because of the difficulties with the security office on Gorodomlya Island in obtaining permission to visit Ostashkov, we Germans usually requested one of our group to represent others in visiting the city and purchasing food in the Ostashkov market place. There it was possible to purchase meat, vegetables, butter, potatoes, and, rarely, eggs, bacon, cream, orange preserves, and honey. There were no food stores other than the market place. The market meat always bore an inspection stamp, but on several occasions I obtained stamped meat which was obviously spoiled. It was possible to purchase bread, whisky, and chocolate on Gorodomlya Island. Milk, unobtainable in the Ostashkov market, was brought to the island for sale; it was not pasteurized.
20. Although Lake Seliger contained fish, I never saw any Soviets fishing. Occasionally fish were sold on the island from house to house by Soviets.
21. Preservation of foods was impossible, since refrigeration was not available. Meat or other perishables had to be eaten at once in the summer.

WATER SUPPLY

22. Gorodomlya Island was approximately 2 x 3 km in area. In the center was a small lake which was the source of supply for the public water system. To supplement this source and assure an adequate supply, the Soviets had built several deep wells, but occasionally the pumps broke down. I do not know how the sanitary quality of the water was checked on Gorodomlya but believe the water was chlorinated. However, it was deemed necessary to heat all water before use. The better water was that taken from the wells; the water from the small lake was usually distasteful.
23. There was no public water system in Ostashkov nor was there any sanitary control of the water drunk. The city's inhabitants got the water which they used directly from Lake Seliger. I also saw wells in the city on several streets.

DISPOSAL FACILITIES

24. The sanitary sewage system on Gorodomlya Island served all of the families of those employed at Branch No. 1 of Institute 88. It did not service the tiny village of the local inhabitants. The sewage system led to a settling basin in a pond where the sewage was chlorinated, and then pumped into Lake Seliger north of the island.
25. No sewage system existed in Ostashkov. Fecal wastes were collected there and used as vegetable fertilizer. A leather factory in Ostashkov dumped its sewage directly into Lake Seliger during the summer or on to the ice in winter.

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26. To my knowledge, neither Ostashkov nor Gorodomlya Island, which was usually swampy, had drainage systems in operation.
27. There were no garbage collection facilities at Ostashkov. Coverless garbage cans were set in front of the houses on Gorodomlya and wastes were deposited therein. Soviet children frequently searched the German garbage for food. The garbage was collected every four weeks; I do not know what was done with this refuse.

BURIAL PROCEDURES

28. The Soviet dead were regularly buried within 24 hours in a cemetery in Ostashkov. No burials were permitted on Gorodomlya. The reason was that during World War II the island had been the site of a field hospital; soldiers who died at the hospital were buried on the island and the Soviets did not wish to disturb their graves because of the danger of infection. Germans who died on the island were cremated in Moscow.

PEST CONTROL

29. There was no organized pest control to combat the myriads of mosquitoes, flies, lice, bedbugs, and cockroaches on Gorodomlya Island. Another nuisance was the presence of innumerable mice, although there were no rats. Ostashkov was plagued with rats but not mice. These "Siberian" mice were about 9 c.m. long and had a tail about 11 c.m. long. Their heads resembled the head of a rat rather than a mouse. These mice were grayish-brown and had light-colored fur on their stomachs. Most families kept cats to combat these pests.

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